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European Colonies in the Western Hemisphere
BY A. RANDLE ELLIOTT

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BY A. RANDLE ELLIOTT

THE Havana Conference of American Foreign Ministers, which concluded its work on July 30, revealed the anxiety prevalent among American nations that potential enemies might gain control over the remaining European colonies in this hemisphere—either by actually seizing them as spoils of war or, as is more likely, by ruling them through and in the name of their present owners.¹ While these colonial possessions differ widely in economic resources, social conditions and strategic value, the delegates at Havana agreed that the American republics could permit none of them to come under German or Italian domination. Modern methods of air and naval warfare have made many of the colonies vitally important for hemispheric defense, and any of them could be used as a base for subversive activities in the American republics. In the hands of hostile powers, the colonies could become a serious threat to the United States, as well as to the other American nations, while under American control or "collective trusteeship" they would constitute a valuable extension of the United States defense system.

The effectiveness of this system, as organized at present, depends to a great extent on keeping the Panama Canal open at all times. Control over the Caribbean approaches to the Canal, therefore, is a prime requisite of American security. With naval and air bases at Guantánamo Bay (Cuba) and San Juan (Puerto Rico), the United States commands access to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean from the north, but not from the southeast.² To remedy this deficiency, the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs recommended on May 15, 1940 that the government should either acquire, if pos-

1. In his opening speech before the Havana Conference on July 22, Secretary of State Hull asserted that the American republics could not permit the European possessions in this hemisphere "to become a subject of barter in the settlement of European differences, or a battleground, for the adjustment of such differences. . . . It is accordingly essential that we consider a joint approach to this common problem. We must be in a position to move rapidly and without hesitation." For text of Secretary Hull's speech, cf. *The New York Times*, July 23, 1940. The work of the Havana Conference will be discussed in a forthcoming issue of *Foreign Policy Reports* by Howard J. Trueblood, who attended the conference as an observer.

sible, "places in the Caribbean area for additional United States naval bases, or prevent their use as enemy air or submarine bases. . . . A fleet air base in the southeast corner of the Caribbean would undoubtedly add to the security of that area as well as to the ability of the United States fleet to insure the integrity of the Monroe Doctrine."³ Similarly, military experts have testified that American defense would be strengthened if the United States could obtain outlying air and naval bases at Bermuda and Nova Scotia or Newfoundland, to protect the approaches to our Atlantic shores, much as the major United States base at Pearl Harbor (Hawaii) and the projected secondary bases at Dutch Harbor and Kodiak Island (Alaska) can command approaches to our Pacific coasts.⁴

Most of the strategic islands near United States waters are British, and to date the war has created no serious problems in connection with Great Britain's American colonies. Britain, France, the Netherlands and Denmark—the only European countries with colonial holdings in America—

2. Coastal defenses control the Straits of Florida; Guantánamo fronts on the Windward Passage; San Juan dominates the Mona Passage; while Culebra Island (off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico) and St. Thomas (Virgin Islands) guard the Anegada and Virgin Passages. Seven other passages from the Atlantic into the Caribbean, however, lead through the Leeward and Windward Islands now under the sovereignty of Britain and France; of these seven, the most important—and, at the same time, farthest from American control (518 miles from St. Thomas)—is the heavily used passage between Tobago and Trinidad.

3. United States, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, *Report of Senate Committee on Naval Affairs*, Report No. 1615, p. 13.

4. Major George Fielding Eliot has pointed out that the increased range, speed and destructive power of modern weapons present three impelling reasons why the United States should acquire new island bases in the Atlantic Ocean:

(1) To extend the radius of our naval and air action into areas where our forces cannot operate efficiently from existing bases.

(2) To forestall the possibility that potential enemies might establish bases off our coasts.

(3) To provide havens for our merchant vessels and aircraft, and points of support for patrol forces and convoy escorts. Cf. *New York Herald Tribune*, March 7, 1940.

A House Military Affairs subcommittee recommended on July 11, 1940 that the United States acquire and fortify fleet and air bases in Bermuda and Nova Scotia, to strengthen Atlantic Coast defenses and serve as threats to the flank or rear of any invading force. Cf. *Congressional Record*, Appendix, July 11, 1940, pp. 14458-59.

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have all been regarded as friendly and "satiated" powers, whose footholds near our coasts do not threaten American security. When Germany, however, occupied and proclaimed a "protectorate" over Denmark on April 9, both the United States and Canada became apprehensive for the future of Greenland, which lies on the most direct northern air route from Europe to America, within 600 miles of the coasts of Labrador. Germany's invasion and conquest of the Netherlands, May 10 to 14, increased this country's concern over a possible redistribution of colonies, since the Dutch naval station in Curaçao, north of Venezuela, is less than 700 miles from the Panama Canal. Finally, the military collapse of France on June 17—a week after Italy had entered the war to share in Germany's distribution of colonial spoils—removed one of the strongest obstacles to reshuffling Europe's strategic possessions in the New World, and created the possibility that the Axis powers may seek to control French colonies in the name of the Pétain government.

UNITED STATES POLICY

By the middle of June United States policy toward Europe's remaining colonies in this hemisphere had already been clearly indicated. The State Department summarized this policy on June 18, immediately after the French request for

terms of armistice, in a communication to Germany and Italy—as well as to France, Great Britain and the Netherlands—stating that "the United States would not recognize any transfer, and would not acquiesce in any attempt to transfer, any geographic region of the Western Hemisphere from one non-American power to another non-American power."⁵ This "non-transfer principle," generally associated with the Monroe Doctrine, was already an established precedent when President Monroe sent his historic statement of policy to Congress in 1823.⁶ It has been cited many times to keep powerful aggressive states from gaining a foothold near our borders, and has materially affected the ownership of territories in this hemisphere. To keep Germany from acquiring a naval base in the Caribbean, the United States in 1916-17

5. For Secretary Hull's note of June 17, containing instructions to American diplomatic representatives in Rome and Berlin, cf. *Department of State Bulletin*, June 22, 1940, pp. 681-82.

6. The strategic importance of European colonies in America has influenced United States foreign policy since the time of George Washington. For examples, cf. J. B. Moore, *A Digest of International Law* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1906), vol. VI, pp. 369-73. For a brief résumé of the origins of the non-transfer principle, cf. Congressman Bloom's remarks in the *Congressional Record*, June 18, 1940, pp. 12886-87, 12902-03. Examples of its application under the Monroe Doctrine are given in Moore, *A Digest of International Law*, cited, vol. VI, pp. 434-583; also J. Reuben Clark, *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1930), pp. 113-219.

bought the Danish West Indies for \$25,000,000 and relinquished American claims to North Greenland in favor of Denmark.⁷ In 1920, when Great Britain tried to obtain prior purchase rights in case Denmark should ever want to sell Greenland, Secretary of State Colby informed the Danish government that the United States was "not disposed to recognize the existence in a third government of a right of preemption to acquire this territory."⁸

Since the purchase of the Danish West Indies, a number of influential Americans have advocated that the United States acquire other islands off our coasts. By this method, it has been contended, Britain and France could repay their World War debts to the United States.^{8a} During the prolonged international crisis of 1939, a number of Congressmen urged that the President negotiate to acquire

7. Cf. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1926), pp. 573-77, 694-700. Denmark had offered to sell its West Indies (Virgin Islands) to the United States in 1867 for \$7,500,000, and in 1902 for \$5,000,000. For the intermittent Danish-American negotiations with regard to the Virgin Islands, from 1865 to 1917, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 568-69; also S. F. Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (New York, Henry Holt, 1936), pp. 399-403, 521.

Discussions had also been carried on with Sweden in 1818-1819 and 1825 regarding purchase of the island of St. Barthélemy. In 1870, when Italy wanted to buy this island, Sweden offered it to the United States on the same terms as those suggested by the Italian government. Although Secretary of State Fish declined the offer—in the light of public opinion toward the proposed purchase of the Danish Virgin Islands—he expressed the hope that the government of Sweden and Norway would "postpone for the present" any definite disposition of the Italian offer, since its acceptance "might be construed as adverse to that cardinal policy of the United States which objects to new colonies of European governments in this hemisphere." (Clark, *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine*, cited, pp. 148-49.) In 1878 Sweden finally transferred the island to France, but because of its unimportance Washington did not challenge the deal. This is the only instance of a definite violation of the non-transfer principle.

8. Department of State, *Foreign Relations, 1922* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1938), vol. II, pp. 1-3.

8a. The idea of transferring West Indian islands to the United States in payment of war debts was endorsed in Great Britain itself in 1919, but at that time was publicly repudiated by the British government. Cf. *The Times* (London), March 4, 1920. In March 1920 Mr. William G. McAdoo, American Secretary of the Treasury during the World War, became one of the early sponsors of this suggestion in the United States. In April 1921 Senator James A. Reed introduced two Senate Resolutions requesting the President to ascertain whether Britain and France would consider selling their American island possessions to pay the debts. Cf. *Congressional Record*, April 12, 1921, p. 153. Similar proposals have appeared frequently since 1932, when the British and French governments first deferred their debt payments.

During the present war, many Americans have suggested that the British and French governments wipe out their war debts by ceding their American colonies to the United States. Cf. "The Fortune Survey, XXXII—The War," Supplement to *Fortune*, July 1940. In London Sir George Paish, economic adviser to the Chancellor of the Exchequer during the World War, advocated on May 22, 1940 that Great Britain exchange some of its American possessions for United States airplanes and pilots: "Surely out of this vast empire of ours," he observed, "we can spare one or more of the West Indian islands." Cf. *The New York Times*, May 24, 1940.

the strategic islands off our coasts not only as debt payments from Britain and France, but also by outright purchase from Denmark, the Netherlands, and even Latin American countries.⁹ Resolutions now pending before Congress provide for government purchase of all colonial possessions held by European powers in the Western Hemisphere. "In the event negotiation and purchase fails," one resolution would authorize the President "to acquire such vital and necessary islands and possessions by the armed forces of the United States."¹⁰ Although apparently no action has been taken to obtain these islands for additional United States naval bases, the government seems determined, in line with the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, to "prevent their use as enemy air or submarine bases."

On April 10, 1940, the day after Germany had invaded Denmark, the Danish Minister in Washington conferred with President Roosevelt, and both agreed that Greenland is part of the American Continent and is covered by the Monroe Doctrine.¹¹ President Roosevelt promptly arranged to have the United States supply Greenland with foodstuffs and other essential materials normally sent by Denmark, and on May 1 the State Department announced the provisional establishment of an American consulate at Godthaab.¹² The United States is more concerned with preventing occupation of Greenland by European powers than with taking possession of the island itself, but the Danish government has indicated its concern over Washington's motives by appointing a special delegation to visit this country and discuss Greenland's future.¹³

9. Cf. especially *Congressional Record*, April 19, 1939, pp. 4456-57; May 9, 1939, p. 5310; July 17, 1939, pp. 9248-50.

10. S.J. Res. 282, introduced by Senator Ernest Lundein. Cf. *Congressional Record*, June 20, 1940, p. 13117. For other resolutions, cf. *ibid.*, March 4, 1940, pp. 3508, 3551; April 10, 1940, p. 6442; April 11, 1940, pp. 6561-62; April 18, 1940, p. 7145; May 20, 1940, pp. 9783-84; June 4, 1940, p. 11430.

11. Cf. *The New York Times*, April 11, 1940.

12. Cf. *Department of State Bulletin*, May 4, 1940, p. 473; also *The New York Times*, April 13, May 2, 1940. Following Iceland's severance of its personal union with Denmark on April 10, the United States had exchanged consular representatives with the Icelandic government on April 23-24. Cf. *Department of State Bulletin*, April 27, 1940, p. 434.

13. Cf. *The American-Scandinavian Review*, Summer, 1940, p. 168. Denmark's anxiety over American interest in Greenland is not unjustified. In 1915, during Danish-American negotiations with regard to the Danish West Indies, Secretary of State Lansing, with President Wilson's approval, told the Danish Minister in Washington that "the possible consequence of absorption of Denmark by a great power would create a situation which it would be difficult to meet other than by [American] occupation of the Islands," and that the United States would also feel obliged to take possession of the islands "if Denmark voluntarily, or under coercion, transferred title to the Danish West Indies to another European power, which would seek to convert them into a naval base." Cf. Department of State, *Foreign Relations: The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), vol. II, pp. 501-504.

Germany's invasion of the Netherlands on May 10 had even more prompt and ominous repercussions in the Western Hemisphere. Before the day was over, Allied troops had landed at Curaçao and Aruba in the Netherlands West Indies, "to prevent possible German attempts at sabotage" in the large oil refineries located there.¹⁴ Since the United States government had obtained advance information of the decision to land troops, its acquiescence in the occupation indicates that the Allies did not act contrary to State Department policy. British and French forces had entered the Dutch islands, it was pointed out, in fulfilment of a request from the Netherlands government, and no change in sovereignty was contemplated.¹⁵ Throughout the history of diplomacy under the Monroe Doctrine, however, the United States has opposed *occupation* as well as *transfer* of American colonies by non-American powers. In accepting British and French occupation of the Netherland islands, the government established a precedent that might be invoked against it by Germany, Italy, or other hostile powers.

France's surrender, and the subsequent establishment of a French government willing to cooperate with the Axis powers, created the possibility that Germany and Italy might attempt to set up or use bases in the French colonies with the "consent" of the recognized French government and without any formal transfer of sovereignty. This problem, which had theoretically existed with regard to Greenland, became more urgent when the French fleet was withdrawn from action and the Axis powers approached naval equality with Great Britain. The potential dangers of this situation were stressed on July 4, when British warships began to patrol the waters off France's naval base at Martinique in the West Indies, ostensibly to prevent the 22,146-ton French aircraft carrier *Béarn*, its cargo and complement of over 100 American-made planes, the cruiser *Jeanne d'Arc*, several other French vessels, munitions and troops—all of which were then at Martinique—from proceeding to France or otherwise aiding Germany's prosecution of the war.¹⁶ The United States showed immediate interest in the tense situation by sending six American destroyers and a heavy cruiser to observe developments. On July 8, more-

over, Washington indicated its return to the traditional policy regarding foreign occupation of territory in the Western Hemisphere, when Administration officials made it clear that neither Great Britain nor Canada would be permitted to gain control over the strategic French island.¹⁷ This statement was underscored on July 19 by a State Department announcement that an American consulate would be reopened at Fort-de-France.¹⁸

The possibility that Germany might conquer Great Britain renders the problem of Europe's colonies in the New World even more acute. Should the Reich control the British fleet, it might make a formidable attempt to acquire, or gain concessions in, the many strategic positions which Britain now holds in the Western Hemisphere. If a puppet government subservient to the Reich were set up in Britain, Germany might legally dominate the British colonies without claiming sovereignty over them. But whatever the outcome of Britain's life-and-death struggle with Nazi Germany, Washington is now determined that actual control over the remaining European colonies in the New World must accord with American interests and be approved by the American nations. This was the object of the United States proposal, submitted to the Havana Conference on July 23, that a commission be set up by the American republics to administer European colonies in this hemisphere until it is practicable to return them to their former owners or to grant them self-government.¹⁹ This proposal was adopted in modified form on July 30, and was reinforced by the "Act of Havana," which establishes the right of any American republic to act in an emergency to prevent colonial changes that might impair the security of the American nations.²⁰

17. Cf. *The New York Times*, July 9, 1940.

18. The American consulate formerly maintained in Martinique had been closed for more than a year. Cf. *The New York Times*, July 20, 1940. On July 27 an American consulate was also re-established at Georgetown, British Guiana, where the United States government had not been represented for seven years. The State Department further announced on August 10 that the consulate at St. Pierre would soon be reopened.

19. The preamble stated that "the American republics would regard any transfer, or attempted transfer, of the sovereignty, jurisdiction, possession or any interest in, or control over, any such region to another non-American State as inimical to their peace, safety and political independence." For complete text of the "collective trusteeship" proposal, cf. *The New York Times*, July 24, 1940. The bare outlines of this project had been advanced by Miguel Angel Campa, Cuban Secretary of State, at the Second Conference of the Caribbean, which met in Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, from May 31 to June 6, 1940. Cf. Foreign Policy Association, *Pan American News*, June 6, 1940, pp. 1-2; also *La Prensa* (New York), June 5, 7, 1940.

20. For text of the convention creating the "Inter-American Commission of Territorial Administration," cf. *The New York Times*, July 30, 1940. For an analysis of its significance and a summary of the Act of Havana, cf. text of Secretary Hull's closing statement, *ibid.*, July 31, 1940.

EUROPEAN POSSESSIONS IN THE AMERICAS

European possessions in America have provoked many conflicts and disputes in the past, chiefly because they were long regarded as potential sources of wealth. With the significant exception, however, of Canada, which is now a self-governing Dominion, most of them have proved to be economic liabilities as far as the production of native wealth is concerned. The Guianas, rich in natural resources, have never been extensively exploited because of their unhealthful climate, dangerous jungles, and poor transportation facilities. The development of tropical agricultural products for which the Caribbean colonies are best suited—notably sugar—has been accompanied by a prevailing tendency toward over-supply in world markets and a consequent depression of prices. At the same time, cultivation of foodstuffs for local consumption has been neglected, while the excessive growth of population has created intense economic and social problems among the inhabitants.²¹ Owing to the geographical situation of the island colonies, however, the budgets of these possessions are usually balanced.²² Tourist expenditures and customs receipts provide important sources of revenue in most of the islands, while the existence of deep-water harbors in Curaçao and Aruba, off the shallow Venezuelan coasts, has led to the establishment of profitable oil refining industries in the Dutch West Indies. Many of the other colonies, moreover, could increase their output of minor products which the United States and Latin American countries might absorb in greater proportions, such as sisal hemp, spices, pineapples, citrus fruits, coconuts and rice. These commodities, as well as others which might be developed in the tropical colonies, would assume even greater importance if the Western Hemisphere were cut off from its present source of supplies in the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies.²³ It is probable that, with American guidance and backing, most of the colonies might become self-supporting. But students of naval affairs who urge the United States to take over some of the West Indian islands assert that the islands need not necessarily have to pay for themselves. They point out that while the Virgin Islands are a poor

economic investment, their material value for American defense is very great.²⁴

24. Cf. "U.S. Ready to Occupy Islands in Caribbean?" cited, pp. 28-29.

EXPORTS OF LEADING COMMODITIES, 1938*

Source	Quantity	Value
SUGAR		
British Guiana	108,581 met. tons	\$7,715,042
Trinidad and Tobago	109,088 " "	5,050,750
Jamaica	95,299 " "	4,202,439
Martinique	51,395 " "	4,172,928
Guadeloupe	45,328 " "	3,607,497
Barbados	78,398 " "	3,295,456
Leeward Islands	42,773 " "	1,838,410
Surinam†	12,233 " "	342,344
St. Lucia	7,081 " "	316,398
RUM		
Martinique†	1,704,340 gals.	2,532,998
Guadeloupe	3,048,382 " "	2,063,742
Jamaica	899,821 " "	1,212,571
British Guiana	1,056,288 " "	483,288
MOLASSES		
Barbados	7,139,000 gals.	2,474,036
British Guiana	5,892,000 " "	308,032
Leeward Islands	1,559,000 " "	82,899
BANANAS		
Jamaica	402,860 met. tons	14,262,164
Guadeloupe	50,281 " "	2,478,821
Martinique†	39,362 " "	1,990,713
COCOA		
Trinidad and Tobago	17,191 met. tons	2,415,364
Grenada	4,212 " "	620,563
Jamaica	2,358 " "	229,899
St. Lucia	309 " "	40,738
Guadeloupe	134 " "	17,125
Martinique	204 " "	15,052
COFFEE		
Jamaica	4,292 met. tons	649,835
Surinam†	2,493 " "	291,391
Guadeloupe	327 " "	108,580
Trinidad and Tobago	311 " "	40,502
COCONUTS		
Jamaica	33,415,393 nuts	411,467
British Honduras	4,779,293 " "	49,192
St. Lucia	2,674,148 " "	40,474
Trinidad	2,245,302 " "	32,573
RICE		
British Guiana	13,118 met. tons	589,251
Surinam†	7,443 " "	227,867
BALATA GUM		
Surinam	277 met. tons	172,024
British Guiana	220 " "	166,768
PETROLEUM AND PRODUCTS		
Curaçao and Aruba†	20,698,173 met. tons	146,882,336
Trinidad and Tobago	440,100,000 gals.	19,987,867
GOLD\$		
French Guiana	1,264,000 grams	1,422,349
British Guiana	1,126,289 " "	1,267,386
Surinam	485,181 " "	545,962
BAUXITE		
Surinam†	392,329 met. tons	2,699,225
British Guiana	376,368 " "	2,057,899
TIMBER		
British Honduras	41,249 cubic meters	1,054,468
British Guiana	16,820 " "	253,745
Surinam	1,539 " "	35,058

21. For a more detailed analysis of social and economic problems in Caribbean colonies, cf. "West India Royal Commission, 1938-39; Recommendations," *Parliamentary Papers*, Cmd. 6174 (London, H.M. Stationery Office, February 1940), pp. 17-23.

22. For a general statement of colonial finances, cf. "U.S. Ready to Occupy Islands in Caribbean?" *United States News*, July 5, 1940, p. 29.

23. For the economic aspects of hemispheric defense, cf. H. J. Trueblood, "Economic Defense of the Americas," *Foreign Policy Reports*, August 1, 1940, pp. 128-36.

FISH

Newfoundland	37,932 met. tons	4,522,695
St. Pierre and Miquelon**	5,687 "	330,773

ANIMAL AND FISH OILS

Falkland Islands	31,976 met. tons	1,939,693
Newfoundland	559,000 gals.	254,249

*Compiled chiefly from: *Statistical Abstract for the British Empire, 1929 to 1938* (London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1939); *Annuaire Statistique, 1938* (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1939); *Bulletin de la Statistique Générale de la France* (Paris, Librairie de Félix Alcan, 1939); *Curacaosch Verdrag, 1938* (The Hague, Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1939), vol. II; *Surinaamsch Verdrag, 1938* (The Hague, Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1939), vol. II; *Minerals Yearbook, 1939* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939); *West Indies Year Book, 1939* (Montreal, Thomas Skinner of Canada, 1939); *Statesman's Year-Book, 1940* (London, Macmillan, 1940); Martinique, Douanes: *Statistiques, 1938* (Fort-de-France, Service des Douanes, 1939); Suriname, *Handelstatistik, 1938* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1939).

†Figures for 1937.

**Figures for 1936.

§Value of gold determined at rate of \$35 per ounce.

Newfoundland and Labrador.²⁵ The economic and strategic value of Newfoundland and Labrador is considerably diminished by their cold climate, but Newfoundland's potential importance is by no means negligible. This British island has rich mineral deposits, particularly of iron, coal, silver, lead, copper and zinc, of which only its iron is commercially significant at present.²⁶ Newfoundland's vast timber reserves have encouraged the establishment of a growing industry in wood and paper products.²⁷ Fishing is still its principal occupation, however, and is almost the only industry in Labrador. Although the larger bays on Labrador's Atlantic coast freeze solid between December 1 and 15, and remain icebound until late in June, they could be useful as bases for submarine operations in the North Atlantic in summer. The coasts of Newfoundland are indented with deep bays, many of which are exceptionally good for anchorage, and nearly all of which afford shelter to ves-

25. Area: about 152,734 square miles (Newfoundland, 42,734 square miles; Labrador, about 110,000 square miles). Population: 307,000. (This and all succeeding population figures are unofficial estimates for 1940, based on most recent census data. For exact figures at the last official census of each government, cf. *The Statesman's Year-Book, 1940*, cited.) Labrador is governed as a dependency of Newfoundland.

The September 1 issue of *Foreign Policy Reports*, by James Frederick Green, will discuss the importance of Canada during the present war. For general information on the British possessions, cf. *The Statesman's Year-Book, 1940*, cited; British Colonial Office, *Colonial Reports* (London, H.M. Stationery Office, annual).

26. Iron ore is mined with ease on Great Bell Island at the Wabana deposits, which contain 54 per cent metallic iron. In 1938 Newfoundland exported 1,760,000 metric tons of iron ore, valued at \$4,385,792. Production of the other minerals, however, is comparatively slight; zinc led this secondary group in exports in 1938 with 124,000 tons, worth \$2,166,004, while 42,000 tons of lead concentrates worth \$1,740,626 were exported. Cf. *Statistical Abstract for the British Empire, 1929 to 1938*, cited p. 103.

27. In 1938 its exports of paper, the colony's leading product, totaled 293,654 metric tons, valued at \$13,592,532. It also exported 103,811 cords of pulpwood, worth \$831,198. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 104.

sels during the summer and fall months.²⁸ Several natural harbors on the northern coast are suitable for naval purposes, and might be converted into advantageous bases for use about six months of the year. A new commercial air field and harbor development has been started at Botwood, on the Bay of Exploits, which lies on the direct air route between New York and London.²⁹ Its future value may be determined by military as well as commercial needs.

Bermuda.³⁰ Diminutive Bermuda, famous for the tourist trade which constitutes its chief source of income, is perhaps more important for United States defense than any other European colony in the Western Hemisphere. It forms the hub of a defense circle extending from Halifax, Nova Scotia, down the United States coast and over to San Juan, Puerto Rico.³¹ The islands are a noteworthy British naval and military station, with their commanding points fortified. Hamilton Harbor is very good, and the landlocked St. Georges Harbor—which is considerably restricted by shoal banks at present—could be made into a useful haven. Ireland Island is occupied entirely by government establishments, including an important naval radio station and a dockyard completely equipped to handle naval repairs for all vessels ranging up to small and medium-sized cruisers.³² Bermuda, moreover, is well suited for an air base, and lies on the regular transatlantic clipper route

28. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Sailing Directions for Newfoundland* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1931), H.O. No. 73, *passim*.

29. Newfoundland's favored position between Europe and North America caused it to be chosen as the western landing place (at Avalon Peninsula) for most of the transatlantic cables, and the island consequently has excellent telegraphic communication with both continents.

30. Area: 19.3 square miles. Population: 32,200. (Figures are for the entire colony.) Bermuda comprises a group of 360 small coral islands, of which 20 are inhabited. The principal islands, connected by causeways, are Bermuda, Somerset, Ireland, St. Georges, and St. David.

31. Hamilton, Bermuda, is 756 nautical miles from Halifax, 704 from Boston, 679 from New York City, 670 from Newport News, Virginia, and 856 from San Juan. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Table of Distances Between Ports* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1936), H.O. No. 117, pp. 154-55.

32. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Sailing Directions for the Bermuda Islands, Bahama Islands, and Greater Antilles* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1936), H.O. No. 128, Sec. B, pp. 9-15, 208.

LEADING DRY DOCKS AND MARINE RAILWAYS*

Port	Length in feet	Breadth of Entrance in feet	Depth in feet	Lifting power in tons
Bermuda	533 (floor head)	92.9	33 over block	17,500
Aruba	320 on blocks	55.0	5-14 "	2,100
Curaçao	325 "	63.5	4,000
Martinique	419.9 "	91.6	27.8 over sill
Trinidad	365 "	65.0	16.0 "	4,000
Barbados	240 overall	46.0	12.0 "	1,200

*Source: U.S. Navy Department, Hydrographic Office Publications.

via the Azores to Lisbon, Portugal.³³ While enemy planes based on Bermuda could raid American cities along the East Coast, it would be difficult for enemy ships to approach the United States if American planes were able to operate from this strategic Atlantic outpost.

Bahamas.³⁴ The Bahama Archipelago, at its northwestern extremity, extends within 60 miles of the eastern coast of Florida. Although the Bahamas possess no good harbors suitable for naval use, formidable air bases could be constructed on Great Inagua and Grand Bahama Islands. Great Inagua is particularly adaptable for air use,³⁵ and planes based there could dominate the northeastern entrance to the Windward Passage on the Caribbean-Europe route, just as the United States naval station at Guantánamo Bay now commands southern access to the passage. Similarly, an air base on Grand Bahama Island could threaten traffic in the Straits of Florida. Although the Archipelago's coral soils are porous and often impregnated with salt so as to render them agriculturally unimportant,³⁶ the strategic location of the islands makes them vital for defending the United States, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

Jamaica.³⁷ Britain's largest island in the West Indies is Jamaica, a leading commercial center at the crossroads of air and maritime routes between North and South America. For many years Great Britain maintained an important naval base at Kingston, which is only 594 miles from the Panama Canal. Although the present naval station on the island has not been kept up to date during the last few decades—owing to the friendly relations existing between Britain and the United States, and the latter's dominant position in the Caribbean—the deep and spacious harbors at Kingston and Port Royal are very good for naval purposes. Eight

33. Hamilton is 1,806 miles from Fayal, in the Azores, and 2,723 miles from Lisbon.

34. Area: 4,404 square miles. Population: 69,750. The Bahamas consist of more than 700 islands and keys, of which 20 islands are inhabited. The principal islands are New Providence, Abaco, Harbour Island, Grand Bahama, Bimini Islands, Cat Island, Long Island, Mayaguana, Eleuthera, Exuma Islands, San Salvador or Watling Island, Acklins Island, Crooked Island, Great Inagua, and Andros Island.

35. Forty-five miles in extreme length and 18 miles in breadth, the island is in general flat and of adequate elevation. Grand Bahama is 63 miles long and up to 7 miles wide. For descriptive details of all the islands, cf. *Sailing Directions for the Bermuda Islands*, cited, Sec. A.

36. Cf. L. D. Stamp, *Chisholm's Handbook of Commercial Geography* (London, Longmans, Green, 1937), p. 772. Chief exports of the Bahamas are tomatoes, sisal hemp, and sponge.

37. Area, including dependencies: 4,674 square miles. Population, 1,197,000. Dependencies of Jamaica include Morant Cays, Pedro Cays, Cayman Islands; Turks and Caicos Islands. Although administered from Jamaica, the Turks and Caicos Islands are geographically part of the Bahama Archipelago.

other good commercial ports, primarily for medium-sized vessels, supply the island. Jamaica leads the world in its exports of bananas, ginger and pimento (the familiar "allspice," for which Jamaica is the only source), while its production of sugar, rum, coconuts and citrus fruits is also significant.

Leeward Islands,³⁸ **Windward Islands,**³⁹ and **Barbados.**⁴⁰ British islands in the Lesser Antilles are strung along for more than 700 miles between Puerto Rico and the South American Continent, and command all direct approaches to the Panama Canal from the South Atlantic. Many of these islands have rough terrain, unsuitable for airfields, and shallow or unsafe coastal waters, but air and naval bases could be established at certain strategic points. In the Leeward Islands both Nevis and Montserrat could be converted into outlying air bases,⁴¹ while a similar base could be built in the southeastern part of Barbados, which forms a nearly level plateau above the sea cliffs. On the southern coast of Barbados, moreover, Carlisle Bay is well sheltered from prevailing trade winds, and vessels of any draft may anchor there at all times. This island's potential value as an air and naval base is further increased by existing military facilities, which include St. Ann Fort, with its spacious barracks and large parade ground, overlooking Carlisle Bay. Three harbors in the British Windward Islands afford good naval anchorage for all classes of vessels: Port Castries (St. Lucia); Kingstown Bay (St. Vincent); and Admiralty Bay (Bequia Island, Grenadines). Port Castries and Kingstown Bay are both defended by military emplacements on the hills overlooking them. Although each of these four harbors is too small to accommodate a large navy, together they could be used by a sizable fleet.

Island economy in the Lesser Antilles is based primarily on tropical agriculture. Except for rather general production of cane sugar and more recently of sea island cotton, the leading commodi-

38. Area: 422.5 square miles. Population: 94,500. Britain's Leeward Islands colony is divided into four presidencies: the British Virgin Islands; St. Christopher or St. Kitts (with Nevis and Anguilla); Antigua (with Barbuda and Redonda); and Montserrat.

39. Area: 820.8 square miles. Population: 265,250. The Windward Islands colony consist of the following islands, each with a large degree of self-government: Dominica (in the Leeward Islands colony until January 1, 1940), St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, and the Grenadines (half governed under St. Vincent, half under Grenada).

40. Area: 166.5 square miles. Population: 196,250. Occupied by the English in 1627, Barbados—unlike most of the neighboring islands—has never changed hands.

41. Montserrat is the better of the two for this purpose because, in contrast with most Caribbean islands, it contains many springs of excellent water. Montserrat is 32.5 square miles in area, and Nevis 50 square miles.

ties of the islands defy generalization. Montserrat and St. Lucia have long been noted for their lime juice; St. Vincent for its arrowroot; Grenada for its nutmeg and mace.

Trinidad and Tobago.⁴² Trinidad, at some points only a few hundred yards from the mainland of Venezuela, is geologically a South American island. Its vast resources of petroleum, of which it is the largest producer in the British Empire (38 per cent, or 17,737,061 barrels, in 1938), are part of the rich Venezuelan deposits. Its famous "bottomless" Pitch Lake is the leading source of natural asphalt for modern macadamized roads; and although asphalt is now produced more cheaply from petroleum, 85,089 long tons of the natural product were exported from Trinidad in 1938. Trinidad and Tobago also export a great variety of tropical agricultural products, chief among which are sugar and cocoa.⁴³ The United States, however, is interested in these islands primarily because of their key position astride the principal maritime route from the Caribbean (and West Coast of the United States) to the Atlantic coast of South America. Although there are no major harbor developments in Trinidad, the Gulf of Paria—about 90 miles in extreme length, and almost completely landlocked—contains a number of sheltered anchorages. Port-of-Spain Harbor affords safe anchorage at all seasons, and harbor improvements have been in progress there for several years. Chaguaramas Bay, sheltered by Gaspar Grande Island and a high headland to the southeast, could be strongly fortified. The shallow southern entrance to the Gulf of Paria would have to be dredged, and obstacles removed from the northern entrance, before it would be suitable for extensive naval use. But within a few years the western coast of Trinidad could be made into a strong air and naval base, unmatched by any in the eastern Caribbean.⁴⁴

British Honduras.⁴⁵ The only European colony on the mainland of Central America is British Honduras, which exports valuable mahogany and logwood, as well as various tropical agricultural products. On the estuary of Belize River, the port of Belize—which in popular language has given

42. Area: 1,976 square miles (Trinidad, 1,862; Tobago, 114). Population: 480,500. Tobago is administered from Trinidad.

43. For a detailed summary of the colony's economy, cf. J. A. Croghan, "Foreign Trade of Trinidad," *Commerce Reports*, July 27, 1940, pp. 654-55.

44. For details of the coasts of Trinidad and the Gulf of Paria, cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Sailing Directions for the Lesser Antilles and Venezuela* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1937), H.O. No. 129, pp. 245-70.

45. Area: 8,598 square miles. Population: 59,500. For a review of Guatemala's claims to part of British Honduras, cf. *Pan American News*, cited, February 15, 1940, pp. 4-5.

its name to the whole colony—is extensively used for coastwise traffic. It was formerly a well-defended colonial stronghold, but under modern conditions of warfare it has comparatively little strategic value. The coasts of British Honduras are shallow and subject to damaging hurricanes,⁴⁶ while forests, as well as disease—both of which are prevalent—have deterred development of the interior.

British,⁴⁷ French,⁴⁸ and Dutch Guiana.⁴⁹ In their physical features, the Guianas exhibit characteristics similar to those of British Honduras. The coasts of all three colonies are very shallow, with mud banks extending offshore for 5 to 12—and in places as far as 20—miles. Their only ports are at the mouths of rivers, and even these are not accessible to large craft.⁵⁰ British and Dutch Guiana—or Surinam—have developed agriculture on the coastal belt, their staple crops being sugar cane and rice, while coconuts, cocoa and coffee are also raised. All of the Guianas are covered with immense forests of valuable timber, and all have rich mineral deposits, most of which are still unworked and many unsurveyed. In 1938 Surinam and British Guiana together furnished 98 per cent of United States imports of bauxite.⁵¹ Gold is a leading item of export from all three colonies.⁵² Deposits of other strategic minerals include manganese, mica, mercury and iron. The great Guiana waterfalls, moreover, could be harnessed to produce all the electric power required for industrial development. But owing to the primitive hinterland and debilitating climate, Guiana resources probably will not be developed for many years. Meanwhile, they have a strong attraction for powerful states which lack raw materials.

Falkland Islands.⁵³ About 300 miles east of

46. The capital city of Belize itself was swept by a hurricane and tidal wave in September 1931, when about half the inhabitants perished.

47. Area: 89,480 square miles. Population: 340,000.

48. Area: about 65,040 square miles (34,740 in French Guiana proper, and about 30,000 in the Territory of the Imini, which is administered from French Guiana). Population: 38,000.

49. Area: 54,305 square miles. Population: 178,500. The official name for this colony is Surinam.

50. Cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Sailing Directions for South America*: Vol. I (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1935), H.O. No. 172, pp. 17-18.

51. Approximately two-thirds of all aluminum made in the United States is produced from Guiana bauxite. Cf. *Pan American News*, cited, June 6, 1940, p. 9. Vast bauxite reserves in French Guiana have never been prospected. Cf. *Minerals Yearbook*, 1939, cited, p. 649.

52. British Guiana also produces diamonds, of which in 1938 it exported 33,509 carats, worth \$384,155.

53. Area: 4,618 square miles. Population: 2,400. (Figures do not include South Georgia, South Shetlands, South Orkneys, the Sandwich Group, and Graham's Land, all of which are governed as dependencies of the Falklands.)

Magellan Strait, the Falkland Islands are a key to naval operations off the lower Atlantic coast of South America. Although Argentina has acquiesced in Britain's claim to the Falklands, generally accepted since 1833, the Argentine government has never recognized it as legitimate.⁵⁴ The islands, indented by many sounds and bays which form excellent harbors, are well-suited for naval purposes despite the foggy climate. The British navy maintains important fueling and wireless stations at Port Stanley, although the city is virtually undefended at present.⁵⁵

St. Pierre and Miquelon.⁵⁶ The two small groups of fishing islands south of Newfoundland are France's oldest colony. Less exposed to polar currents than the eastern coast of Newfoundland, the harbors of St. Pierre and Miquelon do not freeze in winter, and atmospheric conditions there are more favorable for aviation than at Newfoundland. St. Pierre Island has several small but defended ports, the best of which is on St. Pierre Harbor. Air bases could be constructed on both St. Pierre and Miquelon Islands, on the Great Circle air route between New York and Paris. St. Pierre, moreover, operates a good meteorological service, which is very useful for air and maritime navigation, and a powerful radio station; it is also a relay point on one of the leading submarine telegraphic systems, and enjoys excellent rapid communication with Europe and America.⁵⁷ Although isolated military establishments on St. Pierre and Miquelon could not be successfully defended

54. In accordance with a decree issued by the government of Buenos Aires in 1829, the Argentine government—as legal successor of Spain—still claims the Falklands, under the name of Malvinas Islands. Following the forced withdrawal of Argentine colonists from the islands in December 1831, British troops took possession of the Falklands in January 1833, pursuant to old British claims which had been asserted successfully against Spain in 1770-71. For details of Argentine and British claims to the Falklands, cf. Moore, *A Digest of International Law*, cited, vol. I, pp. 298-99, 876-90.

When the Argentine delegation signed the Declaration of Panama on October 3, 1939, it specifically reserved and maintained intact "the legitimate titles and rights of the Argentine Republic to islands such as the Malvinas, as well as to any other Argentine territory." For text of the reservation, cf. Department of State, *Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics, Held at Panamá, September 23-October 3, 1939* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1940), p. 68. Argentina again reserved its rights to the islands in signing the Act of Havana, July 30, 1940.

55. Sheep-farming, whaling and sealing are the chief industries. In 1938 exports of wool from the Falklands totaled 3,618,000 pounds, valued at \$796,972.

56. Area: 93 square miles (St. Pierre group, 10 square miles; Miquelon group, 83 square miles). Population: 4,200. For general information on the French colonies, cf. G. Grandidier, ed., *Atlas des Colonies Françaises* (Paris, Société d'éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1934).

57. Cf. Michel Geistdoerfer, "L'Avenir de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon," *Univers Français*, March 15-30, 1940, pp. 55-57.

against attack from near-by shores, the islands would have considerable strategic value for any power in control of Newfoundland.

Guadeloupe⁵⁸ and Martinique.⁵⁹ The French colonies in the Lesser Antilles, like those of Britain, are important primarily for their strategic location. Fort-de-France, Martinique, is a useful station for the French fleet and the seat of the High Command of French troops in the West Indies. It is a distributing center for gasoline and kerosene, and large storage tanks have been built west of the city, which also contains a drydock fitted to repair large destroyers. Fort-de-France Bay, over three miles wide and six miles long, is far superior to any other colonial harbor in the Eastern Caribbean; it affords several good naval anchorages, secure against all winds, for all classes of ships, and is defended from old forts on the surrounding heights.⁶⁰ Another good, but more restricted, harbor is situated at Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, at the intersection of several world trade routes. This port is now undefended, but could be transformed into a powerful air and naval base, fortified both north and south of the Rivière Salée, which separates Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre Islands.⁶¹ Such a base would be practically impregnable from the sea, and its own planes based on Grande-Terre would protect it against air attack.

In Martinique, as well as in Guadeloupe and its dependencies, the soil and climate are favorable for growing tropical products such as sugar, bananas, coffee, pineapples and spices.⁶² In recent years the island inhabitants have also turned to raising livestock to provide food for local consumption.

Clipperton Island.⁶³ The smallest European possession in the Western Hemisphere, Clipperton Island, dots the eastern Pacific less than 575 miles from the coast of Mexico. Situated between

58. Area: 688 square miles. Population: 319,500. (Figures are for the entire colony.) Guadeloupe—which consists of two islands, Basse-Terre and Grand-Terre—includes as dependencies the islands of Les Saintes, Marie Galante, Désirade, St. Barthélemy, and the northern half of St. Martin.

59. Area: 385 square miles. Population: 258,700.

60. Cf. *Sailing Directions for the Lesser Antilles and Venezuela*, cited, p. 182; *Annuaire de la Vie Martiniquaise*, 1936 (Fort-de-France, Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1935), p. 357.

61. For a detailed description of the harbor, cf. Fernand Guilliod, "Le Port de Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe)," *Journal de la Marine Marchande*, April 1, 1937, pp. 435-39.

62. For a complete list of Martinique's crops, with production statistics, cf. *Journal Officiel de la Martinique*, December 23, 1939, pp. 1331 ff.

63. Area: 3.1 square miles land surface; surrounding a circular lagoon about 2 miles in diameter. Uninhabited. Mexico claimed Clipperton Island for many years, but in March 1931 King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy, as arbiter, finally decided that the island was French.

the routes from Australia and the Hawaiian Islands to Panama, Clipperton's flat surface might be developed as an emergency airplane landing field, while the center lagoon could be cleared of volcanic rock fragments and converted into a minor Pacific seaplane station.⁶⁴ It is doubtful, however, whether the island will ever be of much naval significance, since its coasts are dangerous for ships of all types, affording no protection against the prevalent heavy squalls.⁶⁵

Curaçao.⁶⁶ The small Netherland colony of Curaçao occupies an important place in Caribbean economy and strategy. Since only shallow-draft vessels can enter Lake Maracaibo, Venezuelan oil has to be transshipped through the islands of Curaçao and Aruba, both of which have excellent harbors. Of 171,000,000 barrels of crude oil exported from Venezuela in 1937, 138,000,000 were sent to these two islands. Because of this transit trade, the Netherlands West Indies have developed a great petroleum refining industry, which produces gasoline and fuel oil (as well as smaller amounts of gas, Diesel oil, and minor products) for American and European markets.⁶⁷

The Netherlands government has maintained a fortified naval station at Willemstad, Curaçao, on Santa Anna Bay. Four other bays on the island are good for commercial purposes, and one is adaptable for naval use. Most of the harbors are lined with large oil storage tanks. Willemstad has two dry docks, and another is operated at St. Nicolaas Bay in Aruba. In addition to St. Nicolaas

64. In June 1939, after consultation with the War Department, Senator Lundein reported that Clipperton would be valuable for defending the western approach to the Panama Canal. Cf. *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1939, p. 7448.

65. For descriptive details of Clipperton Island, cf. U.S. Navy Department, *Sailing Directions for the West Coasts of Mexico and Central America* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1938), H.O. No. 84, pp. 52-53.

66. Area: 403 square miles. Population: 105,500. (Figures are for the entire colony.) The colony consists of the islands of Curaçao (210 square miles), Aruba (69 square miles), Bonaire (95 square miles), St. Eustatius, Saba, and the southern half of St. Martin; the last three, in the Leeward Group, are relatively unimportant.

67. At present the islands also refine a good deal of Colombia's oil exports, of which Aruba alone took approximately one-half in 1938. In recent years most of Great Britain's imports of gasoline have come from the Netherlands West Indies. Cf. *The Bulletin of International News*, June 29, 1940, pp. 772-73.

None of the islands in the Netherlands West Indies is a significant agricultural producer. The island of Curaçao, which is practically waterless, is wholly uncultivated. Various minor industries adaptable to local conditions have been developed in the islands. In addition to petroleum products and minor manufactures, Curaçao in 1938 exported 99,283 metric tons of phosphates, worth \$488,878. Cf. *Jaarverslag van de Kamer van Koophandel en Nijverheid over het Jaar 1938* (Curaçao, Drukkerij "De Curaçaosche Courant," 1939), p. 58.

For a discussion of current economic trends in the Netherlands West Indies, cf. *Commerce Reports*, August 3, 1940, pp. 659-60.

Bay, which is perfect for commercial traffic and suitable for limited naval use, Aruba possesses another valuable port for smaller vessels at Paarden Bay. The political affiliation of these islands will always be of great interest to the United States, not alone because of their commercial importance, but because Aruba is only 627 miles from the Panama Canal.

Greenland.⁶⁸ Denmark's only colony in the Western Hemisphere, Greenland, is vast but largely unexplored. For many years its predominant export has been cryolite, which is used as a solvent in the electrolytic production of aluminum from bauxite. In 1938 the United States imported 12,115 long tons of cryolite, of which 11,708 came from Greenland.⁶⁹ Other exports from the colony are fish, fur and graphite.⁷⁰ The fjords along Greenland's coasts are deep, and good natural harbors are numerous; but they freeze solid during most of the year, and consequently have little potential naval use except as submarine havens or seaplane bases during the warm months.⁷¹ Although the island's ice-free coastal regions are too rough for airfields, the expansive ice-capped hinterland is very level and forms what is probably the largest natural airplane landing field in the world, 1,500 miles long and up to 600 miles wide. This ice-capped plain has prospective value for both military and commercial air use. After extensive surveys a few years ago, however, commercial air lines rejected the Great Circle air route between Europe and the United States, via Greenland, as unsuitable because of adverse meteorological conditions.⁷² Violent winds make flying unsafe in the region, just as icebergs and frozen seas generally render sailing dangerous. But as the scientific development of aviation and maritime communications may soon open Greenland to further use, vital interests of the United States would be at stake in any proposal to transfer sovereignty or control over the island from Denmark to another power.

68. Area: 736,518 square miles, of which 705,234 is ice cap, and 31,284 ice-free land. Population: 18,200. For a general description of the colony, cf. Prime Minister Th. Stauning, "Greenland," *The American-Scandinavian Review*, Summer, 1940, pp. 135-40; also P. E. Mosely, "Iceland and Greenland: An American Problem," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1940, pp. 742-46.

69. The deposits at Ivigtut are practically the only source of cryolite, used also in the manufacture of glass, enamels, and insecticides. Cf. *Minerals Yearbook*, 1939, cited, p. 1295.

70. Talc and asbestos, both of good quality, occur in economically workable deposits, although they have never been developed. Gold and manganese spar have also been reported. Cf. British Foreign Office, Historical Section, *Greenland* (London, H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), p. 29.

71. Cf. testimony of Rear Admiral Arthur B. Cook, February 1, 1939, in United States, 76th Congress, 1st Session, *Hearings before the House Naval Affairs Committee on H.R. 2880*, p. 286.

72. Cf. *Congressional Record*, June 15, 1939, pp. 10167-69.

CONCLUSION

The strategic location of most European colonies in the Western Hemisphere makes them vitally important to the United States, but their value is potential rather than real. None of them has a large military establishment at present, and consequently many months of unmolested activity would be required for the construction of adequate air and naval bases. Their economic resources consist chiefly of mineral deposits or uncertain agricultural possibilities which could not be profitably exploited for a number of years. Since occupation of these territories would not bring immediate advantages such as Germany gained by invading Denmark, Holland and Belgium—all of which had stores of foodstuffs, munitions, oil and gasoline—it is unlikely that any European power would try to seize them while engaged in a major war at home. Meanwhile, the American republics should have ample time to guard against the possible seizure of the colonies. If, however, an aggressor should suddenly occupy any of these possessions, it would not be a difficult problem for the United States—operating from its own near-by bases or friendly Latin American territory, while European forces would be relatively far from their source of supplies and possible reinforcements—to drive out the invaders. Or, owing to deficiencies of food, water and other essentials in the colonies, the United States navy could effectively blockade them. Nevertheless, the American republics have recognized—both at Panama in October 1939 and at Havana in July 1940⁷³—that their security would be endangered if any aggressive power were allowed time to construct bases in the colonies.

At Havana the Foreign Ministers of the twenty-one American republics subscribed to a joint and

73. For the October 3, 1939 resolution on "Geographic Regions of the Americas Held by Non-American States," cf. *Report of the Delegate of the United States . . . to . . . Panamá*, cited, p. 66.

specific policy, on the subject of European possessions in this hemisphere, which goes far beyond any previous measures taken to assure Pan-American cooperation. The conference projected a plan under which one or more American governments, by virtue of prior consent, would administer any of the colonies that seems liable to come under the direct or indirect control of a non-American state other than its present sovereign. The American republics reserve for themselves the right to judge, through their respective organs of government, when the convention is to be applied. "Provisional administration"—which would end as soon as the conditions that might necessitate it no longer exist—would be "executed in the interest of the security of America and to the benefit of the administered region looking toward its well-being and development."⁷⁴ The convention, which is to become effective when fourteen of the American republics have ratified it, was reinforced by the Act of Havana, designed as a temporary basis for action. This declaration authorized the creation of an emergency committee to apply the convention until the provisional administration is set up, and recognized the right of each of the American republics, in case of urgent necessity, to "act in a manner required for its defense or the defense of the continent."⁷⁵ Through these two documents—the convention and the declaration—the American republics have provided for practically any emergency which might arise in the European colonies in this hemisphere. They have created political and administrative machinery which should give a new and forceful meaning to Pan-Americanism.

74. The convention stipulates that "the natives of the region shall participate as citizens in the public administration and tribunals of justice," and that "the administration will provide means to diffuse public education, . . . especially in regard to public and individual hygiene, and preparation for the exercise of political autonomy in the shortest time." *The New York Times*, July 30, 1940.

75. For text, cf. *ibid.*, July 29, 1940.

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CANADA AT WAR*

By James Frederick Green